

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 2, line 21 and ending on page 3, line 3, as follows:

These objects and others are achieved in accordance with the invention by an enclosure for items including a simple frame and a flow through mesh on the frame that allows washing water to freely flow to and from the item being washed. An [[A]] opening for the item or items to be washed ~~wash-d~~ may be closed by a zipper. A pocket may be provided for the zipper pull so that when in the closed position, the zipper pull is hidden, the zipper will remain closed, and the zipper pull will not damage fabrics outside the enclosure.

Please amend the paragraph on page 3, lines 19 - 29, as follows:

A first aspect of the invention is directed toward an apparatus for washing at least one item, comprising a frame having a dome shape when viewed from its end, especially when filled ~~filed~~ with items to be washed, and a generally semicircular shape when viewed from its side; and a flow through mesh on the frame which allows washing fluid (generally water) to freely flow to and from the item being washed; the apparatus having an opening through which the at least one item to be washed can be placed into and removed from the apparatus. The frame may have an oval shape when view from its bottom.

Please amend the paragraph on page 4, lines 1 - 16, as follows:

In a second aspect, the invention is directed toward an apparatus for washing at least one item, comprising; a frame having an endless pocket; a stiffener disposed within the pocket, the stiffener having a flexible peripheral shape so that flexing of the stiffener provides a pumping action to assist in circulating washing fluid through the apparatus; and a flow through mesh on the frame which allows washing water to freely flow to and from the item being washed; the apparatus having an opening through which the at least one item to be washed can be placed into and removed from the apparatus. The stiffener may have a length exceeding that of the endless pocket, so that ends of the stiffener overlap each other within the endless pocket. The stiffener may be configured so that one end of the stiffener ~~stiffer~~ telescopes inside the other end.

Please amend the paragraph on page 7, lines 1 - 18, as follows:

Apparatus 10 holds its shape ~~shap~~ due to extruded plastic stiffeners formed of a material such as polypropylene, and having a diameter of approximately 1.0 millimeter. A first stiffener 17 (Fig. 5) is disposed within a first endless fabric pocket 18 sewn to bottom panel 12. The stiffener does not have to be formed as an endless loop, and may be longer than the circumference of panel 12 so that there is some overlap of its ends 19 and 21 within pocket 18 (Fig. 6A). Such overlap is extremely desirable in that it

provides a flexibility in the structure which prevents the stiffener from breaking due to excessive flexing during the washing process in a washing machine. Further, movement of the ends longitudinally with respect to each other so as to slightly increase and decrease the overlap, helps to provide a gentle squeezing action which is similar to that of hand washing, and serves to help circulate or pump the washing water into, through and out of apparatus 10.

Please amend the paragraph starting on page 8, line 29 and ending on page 9, line 15, as follows:

Referring to Fig. 2, a garment to be washed, such as a bra 30, or other delicate article, that should be gently treated to [[t]] maintain its shape, is folded ~~folded~~ before being inserted into apparatus 10. In the case of a bra, the folding may be done so that the cups are aligned aligned one over the other, and in the same direction so that one nests within the other. One or two bras, folded as shown in Fig. 2, may be placed within apparatus 10, by opening zipper 24, and placing the bras therein with the convex part of the cups facing away from bottom panel 12. The zipper is then closed, by pulling the zipper pull 26, as shown in Fig. 3. Zipper pull 26 is then stored within pocket 28, as shown in Fig. 4. Apparatus 10 may then be placed in a clothes washing machine, and the items or garments contained therein will be washed along with other garments in the washing machine that are not contained within apparatus 10.

Please amend the paragraph on page 10, lines 1 - 19, as follows:

It will be understood that while the invention has been described primarily with reference to an apparatus or device for washing delicate items, and in particular items of lingerie, it may have many other uses. For example prosthetic devices of many kinds may be washed and protected, and this may be done in other environments than a washing machine. For example, these additional washing environments may include disinfecting or sterilizing apparatus. Items that can be washed within the apparatus in accordance with the invention may include hair pieces, biological waste containers that must be worn on the body, and a variety of other personal care items that require periodic washing. In addition, the apparatus in accordance with the invention may be used as a container for industrial or other components or parts that may undergo a washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing process. While the washing fluid in a washing machine environment is water, it may be other fluids, such as organic solvents or cleaning fluid.